WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. OF L., BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION, DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, FREE OF COST, TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS.

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
HEADQUARTERS
801-809 G ST. N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.
FRANK MORRISON, SECRETARY SAMUEL GOMPERS, PRESIDENT

No. 9.

A BANNER SETTLEMENT

American Federation of Labor Railway Department Arrives at Amicable Terms With Southern Railway.

Washington, June 3.--James O'Connell, President of the International Association of Machinists, together with the representatives of the Brotherhood of Carmen, Boilermakers, Blacksmiths and Sheet Metal Workers, was successful in arriving at a settlement with the Southern Railway and allied lines. The machinists are to receive from 1½ to 3 cents per hour advance, there being a general adjustment of wages in this craft. The Carmen are to receive a 2-cent an hour advance flat. The boilermakers, blacksmiths and sheet metal workers are to receive approximately the same increase. This settlement affects about 8,000 men, and without doubt the advanced scale will apply, as it has done heretofore, to the Seaboard Air Line, Atlantic Coast Line, Norfolk & Western and Chesapeake & Ohio, with 9,000 additional men. It might not be amiss to observe that the achievement of the labor officials in reaching this agreement is worthy of more than passing mention, for with the lines mentioned all accepting the terms as stated, the approximate advance in wages is over $1,000,000 per year, with bettered working conditions in addition thereto.

WESTMORELAND STRIKE HEARING

Resolution of Congressman Wilson Up for Hearing Before Rules Committee of the House.

Washington, June 3.--A few days ago Congressman Wilson (coal miner) introduced a resolution in the House for an investigation of the strike which has been in progress in the Westmoreland coal fields for over a year. The resolution was referred to the rules committee and a hearing has been hand. The intent of the investigation is to find out whether the coal operators have maintained a system of peonage or have prevented free ingress and egress from certain postoffices, and other vital questions. A number of the miners from the coal fields in question appeared before the committee, as did Mr. Wilson also. Other hearings will undoubtedly be had before the rules committee decides whether or not the investigation shall take place.

Waterloo (Iowa) carpenters secured increase of 5 cents per hour. Barbers reduced working time one-half hour. Plumbers got raise. Painters after short strike, secured 2½ cents per hour increase.

McNAMARA EXTRADITION CASE

Washington, June 3.--The rules committee of the House on May 27-29 held hearings on the resolution introduced by Congressman Berger for a congressional investigation of the arrest and extradition of J. J. McNamara. Statements were made by President Gompers, Frank Ryan, President of the Ironworkers, Congressman Berger and attorney for the Ironworkers, Lee M. Rappaport. The committee listened intently to all testimony presented. No one appeared in opposition to the resolution. Representative Henry, Chairman of the Committee, stated that Congressman Berger and Attorney Rappaport would be permitted to submit such additional facts, affidavits, etc., tending to substantiate the charges, and same would be incorporated in the record. Representative Madison, a Member of the Committee, stated that he felt the Rules Committee was convinced that Mr. McNamara had been extradited illegally, and that no further evidence was necessary to influence the committee to make a favorable report. Members of the committee expressed doubt whether a congressional investigation would add anything to what is already known in the case. It was asserted that the most essential thing to do was to so revise the federal laws that such outrages as the kidnapping of Moyer, Haywood, Pettibone and McNamara could not occur again. The hearings will be printed in pamphlet form for use of the public and to present the matter to the Judiciary Committee, which will consider a number of bills introduced for the purpose of amending the extradition laws.

PENNSYLVANIA STRIKE

Washington, June 3.--The strike among the shopmen of the Pennsylvania Railroad is spreading. Organizers have been endeavoring to organize the men in Altoona ever since the Pittsburg division went out, but not until a few days ago was any progress made. Reports just received contain the information that a large number of men in Altoona have been taken into the union with the alternative in view of a settlement with the company or a general strike of the shopmen at that place.

Jackson (Tenn.) painters secured increase of 5 cents per hour, and Laundry workers secured agreement and increase, with time and one-half for overtime.

Knoxville (Tenn.) painters secured 2½ cents per hour increase.

Texarkana (Texas) printers secured an increase ranging from $1.50 to $3.00 per week.

Carterville (Ill.) city laborers secured an increase from 17½ cents to 25 cents per hour.

East St. Louis (Ill.) carpenters secured 5 cents per hour increase.

Kankakee (Ill.) plumbers, after two weeks' strike, obtained an increase to $4 per day of nine hours, with eight hours after October 1, 1911, with same pay.

TO BANQUET LABOR MEMBERS

Congressmen Who Are Members of Labor Unions Will Be Honored by Washington Central Body.

Washington, June 3.--The Central Labor Union of this city has arranged a banquet for June 14 in honor of the men now members of Congress who are also members of trade unions.

ASSOCIATION DISBANDS

Washington, June 3.--An association called the National Civil Service Improvement Association, organized ostensibly to assist employes in the civil service in procuring an increase in salary, has foundered on the rock of intemperate utterance. Its secretary made a lurid address, and as a result practically all the officers, including mostly business men, resigned, thus leaving the secretary the chief residue of the association.

WILSON'S REPLY TO KIRBY

Vicious Attack by Kirby of Manufacturers' Association at Recent Session in New York.

Washington, June 3.--Realizing, no doubt, the increasing influence of Congressman Wilson, labor's conspicuous friend, President Kirby of the National Manufacturers' Association made an attempt to discredit and cast aspertions on him. The union buster stated that Mr. Wilson had appointed his daughter as secretary of the Labor Committee, of which he is chairman; another daughter as his secretary, and his wife as janitress of the committee room. This statement was characterized as malicious and without foundation. The facts are that his daughter, Agnes, has been Mr. Wilson's secretary for ten years, and has been appointed and confirmed as Secretary of the Labor Committee, from the sole fact of her intimate knowledge of affairs that will come before the committee. The secretary to Mr. Wilson is Hugh L. Kerwin of Wellsboro, Pa,, and the janitor is Dean Van Kirk of Galeton, Pa. The statement made by Mr. Wilson on the floor of the House elicited applause from all quarters.

KNITTING MILLS ORGANIZE

Washington, June 3.--The Wayne Knitting Mills and Old Fort Knitting Mills at Fort Wayne, Ind., have been organized, practically every employe of the factories becoming a member of the Textile Workers.

M'ARDLE RE-ELECTED

Washington, June 3.--P. J. McArdle, for a number of years the president of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, has been re-elected at a convention just recently held at Canton, Ohio.

TO BUILD LABOR TEMPLE

Washington, June 3.--The central body of Joplin, Mo., has taken the preliminary steps to construct a labor temple. A building organization has been almost completed, and it is expected that each union in the city will participate to the full extent of its ability.

WESTERN FEDERATION OF MINERS

Organization Shows Progress in Added Membership and Wage Increases Distributed Over Wide Area.

Washington, June 3.—Ernest Mills, Secretary-Treasurer of the Western Federation of Miners, in a communication to the American Federation of Labor, states that a charter was granted on April 25,1911, to the Bartlesville, Okla., smeltermen, and that after a brief strike their demands for an increase of 15 cents per hour were acceded to and men returned to work. The miners at Cranberry, N. C., have also organized, their union being known as Elk Park Miners' union. Charters have been granted to the smeltermen at Dearing and Altoona, Kan.

TO PROHIBIT SWEATED PRODUCTS

Bill Just Introduced in Parliament to Prevent Importation of Goods Manufactured Under Certain Conditions.

Washington, June 3.—A bill has been introduced in the English Parliament to prevent the importation into the United Kingdom from foreign countries of goods manufactured under sweated conditions. It is provided that the board of trade shall determine whether any goods coming in competition with British made products are manufactured under sweated conditions, and if convinced the board is obliged to inquire into the rate of wages paid and the conditions of employment generally in that trade in the country in which the imported goods are made or produced. Even during the inquiry into the facts authority is conferred to completely prohibit the importation of such alleged sweated products.

MACHINISTS' INCREASES

Washington, June 3.—The International Association of Machinists have recently reached an agreement with the Michigan Central Railroad Company for an increase in wages, the rate now being 34½ cents per hour, flat rate. Another agreement has been entered into between the breweries of Los Angeles, which carries a wage scale of 55 cents per hour, eight hours.

SPEECH BY BUCHANAN

Labor's Congressman from Illinois Addresses the House on the Admission of the Territories.

Washington, June 3.—Frank Buchanan, iron worker, and one of the labor group, made an interesting speech before the House on the admission of New Mexico and Arizona. He devoted almost the entire time to the advocacy of the recall feature of the Arizona constitution. Whatever may be said relative to other members of Congress, it is becoming apparent to many old stagers that the new members of Congress from the ranks of labor are a force that must be reckoned with. Buchanan's effort was commendable and gave evidence of his future usefulness as a legislator.

Vicksburg (Miss.) barbers have reduced their working time one hour per day without loss.

SENATOR CULMINS' VIEWPOINT

Iowa's Insurgent Gives Emphatic Expression on Present Day Conditions In Terms Dramatic.

Washington, June 3.—Senator Albert B. Cummins of Iowa, in an address at the graduation exercises of the Washington College of Law, coined the following:

"The greatest problem that we are facing today, and the one upon which the American Republic will be wrecked, if it is ever wrecked, is the question of distribution of the vast wealth of the nation. I do not for a moment suggest the equality of fortune. The openness of opportunity is what is needed in this country today. Business is being concentrated into the hands of the few, and the vast opportunity that once existed is being taken away. If competition disappears and the mighty combinations control the wealth, there are only two remedies--fixing of prices of commodities by the government or the judicial restoration of the creed of competition. Competition has been called wasteful, evil and cruel, but I would rather have all of its wastefulness, its evil and its cruelty than that one power have the right to say what prices shall be paid for commodities used by the people of this country."

RAILROAD HOUR LAW UPHELD

Supreme Court of United States Declares Statute Limiting Hours of Employment on Railroads Constitutional.

Washington, June 3.--The Supreme Court of the United States handed down a decision that the act approved March 4, 1907, prescribing that employes on railroads should not be required or permitted to remain on duty longer than sixteen consecutive hours, with ten hours intermission, together with the provision that telegraph operators and allied employes guiding train movements shall not be required or permitted to remain on duty over nine hours, is constitutional. Other provisions in the law relate to signal men, at offices and stations, with some variation in the hours of employment allowed. The interstate commerce commission, under the law, is directed to enforce the act.

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY SUSTAINED

Washington, June 3.--The Circuit Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia has rendered a decision that is exceedingly important in that the decision marks the boundary lines of the operation of the employers' liability act as applied to common carriers. The Washington Terminal Company and the Baltimore & Ohio railroad were sued to recover damages on account of an accident which a fireman sustained while operating a switch engine within the precincts of the union station. In the lower court it was held that the Washington Terminal Company did not come within the meaning and provisions of the employers' liability act. The court of appeals holds that a terminal company is a common carrier.

LOCKOUT IN DENMARK

Washington, June 3.--A general lockout of men in the building trades and in the iron and steel industry has taken place throughout Denmark. It is stated that the lockout is likely to spread to other trades.

CIGARMAKERS WINNING

Washington, June 3.—A communication from the American Federation of Labor representative in Porto Rico states that the cigarmakers' strike is successfully closing. All firms have conceded the advance asked save one. The increase ranges from $1 to $2 per thousand, and 2,000 returned to work under the new scale.

GRAND RAPIDS CARPENTERS

Washington, June 3.—Secretary Duffy of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters informs headquarters that the strike in Grand Rapids, Mich., is progressing with men firm, and with the added feature that the mayor, other city officers and prominent citizens are in through sympathy with the strikers.

PAINTERS GET ADVANCE

Washington, June 3.—Local union #69, Brotherhood of Painters, at Utica, N. Y., has just made a settlement of its strike and been granted an increase. The advanced scale is 44 ½ cents per hour, eight-hour day and Saturday half holiday, with a two-year agreement.

INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

This Measure Gaining in Favor, and States in Extreme Sections of Country Adopting It.

Washington, June 3.—The initiative and referendum has reached the stage where there are now no doubts of its being adopted by a great majority of the states. At the last sessions of the California, Washington, Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska, North Dakota, Wisconsin and Florida state legislatures bills were passed looking to its establishment. Only one serious rebuff has been encountered. The legislature of Iowa adopted the Oregon plan, but Governor Carroll vetoed it. Oregon, Oklahoma, Nevada, Missouri, Montana, South Dakota, Maine, Arkansas and Utah have constitutional provisions covering this mode of legislation. Arizona, the near-state, has also provided for it. Utah, however, adopted the provision in its constitution when admitted as a state, but the legislatures since that time have steadfastly refused to enact a statutory law putting it into operation.

CHILD LABOR IN VIRGINIA

Washington, June 3.—Revelations of an appalling character have been brought to light by Dr. A. J. McKelway, secretary of the national child labor committee, relating to the abuses of juvenile labor in the cotton manufacturing industry in Virginia and the South. "If you attempt to pass a drastic child labor law at the next general assembly, you will find a lobby to defeat it composed almost entirely of representatives of the cotton industries. In statistics it has been discovered that 70 per cent of the children employed in the cotton industries of Virginia are illiterate. In Alabama the percentage is lower by 5 percent."

VINDICTIVE OFFICIALS

Washington, June 3.--The officials of the postoffice department are riding to a severe fall, in the form of a searching investigation by Congress, if they continue the autocratic manner in which they have been conducting the affairs of the service during the past few months. While employes are given the "right" to petition "higher ups", yet even if this is done victimization follows. A few days ago thirty-seven mail carriers in this city met in conference and appointed a committee of six to wait on the local postmaster to present some grievances. The committee performed its duty and a week passed, and then came orders from the main office transferring five of the six former committeemen to other sections of the city. This transfer is wholly unsatisfactory, and is taken to mean lese majeste to the officials. The reason for transfer was enumerated "that they were transferred for the good of the service."

UNREST OF EMPLOYES

Washington, June 3.--The enginemen and firemen on the Great Western Railway of Great Britain are protesting against the new conditions of employment imposed on locomotive men. A strike has been threatened. Sharp practice is charged to have been resorted to, and in the present temper of the men the enforcement of the new rules will precipitate a struggle.

OSBORNE RESIGNS

Washington, June 3.--After being in the employ of the Great Eastern Railway for twenty-two years W. V. Osborne, who was the instigator of all the trouble arising out of his successful application that trade union funds should not be used for parliamentary purposes, has resigned his position as foreman porter at Clapton station in order to become secretary of the British Constitutional Association. English trade unionists are not sorry.

CONDUCTORS RAISE SALARIES

Washington, June 3.--The Order of Railway Conductors, in convention at Jacksonville, Fla., raise the salary of the president to $8,500 per year, the senior vice president and secretary to $5,000 each, and the other vice presidents are to receive $4,500 each annually.

DECLINED TO SERVE

Washington, June 3.--John A. Moffit, who has been president of the United Hatters of North America for thirteen years, at their convention just held, declined to become a candidate to succeed himself. The tremendous strain of the past few years in the Hatters' fight against the manufacturers' assaults was partially responsible for his retirement. Labor loses an active and efficient official.

SHEBOYGAN PAINTERS

Washington, June 3.--The painters of Sheboygan, Wis., have secured an increase in wages, a one year agreement and eight hours. The advanced scale is 37½ cents per hour.

LA FOLLETTE'S WEEKLY

Editorial Comment on Right of Government Employes to Organize Takes Issue With President Taft.

Washington, June 3.--There is one United States Senator that always uses terse English in defining his attitude, and that gentleman is Senator La Follette. In the last week's issue of his weekly, under the caption of "Taft's Protest," is found the following:

"President Taft protests against permitting the railway mail clerks to organize and affiliate with the American Federation of Labor. Speaking before the convention of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen at Harrisburg, Pa., May 14, he said:

"'I do not think that reasonably minded trades union men, who are fully alive to the necessity for rigorous means to enforce their rights in their controversies with capital and with their employers, will fail to see the broad difference that exists between their case, in which they are contending for the betterment of their livelihood against the naturally selfish motives of their employers, and that of the class of government employes, who are privileged not only in the amount of their compensation, the less number of hours of their employment and the greater permanency of tenure, and who serve the government of all the people, the very existence of which will be threatened, should they combine together to quit the government service all at once, and paralyze the benefit, and the equal benefits, that the government is properly supposed and held to confer upon the people at large."

Senator La Follette then made this comment:

"But are all government employes a privileged class? More particularly the railway mail clerks, whose efforts to escape oppression inspired the president's protest--are they a privileged class? We think not. When employes of the government are subjected to such treatment as that handed to the men who work in the mail cars, it is time for something more adequate than softly spoken words. As long as we have our Hitchcocks, as long as we have our vicious and autocratic 'gag rule,' as long as employes of the whole people are made victims of political bureaucracy--plain justice demands that there be no distinction between public employes of individuals or corporations. Organization is their only present refuge. It should not be closed to them."

WELSH STRIKE SETTLED

Washington, June 3.--The great Welsh Coal Strike, involving over 12,000 miners, at the Cambrian collieries, has been settled and the men have returned to work. This strike has been in progress for months, and the miners have suffered great privations, but have stood loyal and determined once and for all to settle the question of maintaining a wage scale that would bring to them at least a decent living.

CLYDE ENGINEERS WIN

Washington, June 3.--The engineers on the Clyde (Scotland) have secured an advance in wages. On June 1 the scale went into effect, the advance being 1 shilling a week, with a corresponding increase in other salaries where paid for by piece. A similar advance has also been agreed to, this to take effect six months later, and then the latter rate to apply under a three-year agreement.

STREET RAILWAY MEN

Organization Reports Gratifying Progress in Increased Wages and Numerical Strength.

Washington, June 3.—Since the first of April President Mahon of the street car men reports that charters have been issued at Albia, Iowa, Saratoga Springs, N. Y., and Springfield, Missouri. Increases in wages and better working conditions have been established as follows:

Shreveport, La., new local, secured increase of 2 to 4 cents per hour, minimum run nine hours.

Butler, Pa., increase from 1 to 3 cents per hour, union shop, no tripper work less than five hours; nine-hour day.

Salt Lake City, Utah, increase 1 cent per hour all around, with same proportional increase for track, shop and shed men; time and one-half for track, shop and shed men for overtime and Sunday work, and a two year agreement.

Holyoke, Mass., renewal of contract with general improved conditions; time and a half for overtime.

Cumberland, Md., increase of 10 cents per day all around.

Winnipeg, Man., renewed agreement with an increase of 2 cents per hour for coming year.

Meadville, Pa., received an increase of 1 cent per hour all around.

Peoria, Ill., increase of from 1½ to 4 cents per hour and a three-year agreement.

Rochester, N. Y., secured three-year agreement and an increase of 1 cent per hour affecting every employe in the service.

Boone, Iowa, increase of 1 to 3 cents per hour, affecting trainmen, barn and shopmen.

Pittsburg, Pa., increase of 1 cent per hour all around.

Streator, Ill., increase of from 1 to 2 cents per hour and a two-year agreement.

NEBRASKA STATE FEDERATION

Washington, June 3.—Every state federation affiliated with the American Federation of Labor has been exceedingly active in promoting legislative action during the sessions of the various legislatures closed and just closing. A report has just been received from the Nebraska State Federation, compiled by Will Maupin, president, in which is shown the success which has attended his directing efforts. While no greatly advanced legislation was secured, President Maupin declares that the ground-work has been laid for future effort, and that the work of this year will undoubtedly materialize in actual accomplishments at the next session.

IRON MOLDERS

Washington, June 3.—The International Iron Molders' Union, while reporting trade conditions slack, yet shows a gross increase in membership for the first quarter of the year of 2,015. During this same period, the one in which a greater degree of sickness prevails, compared with other portions of the year, $45,327.60 was paid out for sick benefits. The total amount paid by the organization since 1896, its inception of sick benefit payments, is $1,916,076.45.

FOR WOMAN SUFFRAGE

Washington, June 3.--Both House of the Wisconsin Legislature have passed a bill granting suffrage to women. It will now go to the people for approval.

EXCLUSION AT ANY COST

Washington, June 3.--William Morris Hughes, acting premier of Australia, openly declares that "Australia will never agree, except at the sword's point, to admit Japanese immigrants, even should the refusal mean separation from the mother country."

DETECTIVES STILL ACTIVE

Washington, June 3.--The grand jury in Los Angeles have returned indictments against Bert H. Conners, A. B. Maple and F. Ira Bender, charging them with dynamting the Hall of Records in that city last September, The first two are ironworkers and the latter is president of the local lodge of Blacksmiths. Bail was fixed at $25,000 in each case.

ENGLISH WEAVERS

Washington, June 3.--The weavers in the Huddersfield district, England, have been endeavoring to secure an advance of 15 per cent in wages and the uniform fifty-five-hour week, but the employers have refused to comply in any particular. As a result ballots have been distributed to determine whether the weavers desire to cease work until the recognition of their demands is gained. Rumors of lockout are also heard, and a contest seems imminent.

DEMAND FOR EIGHT HOURS

Washington, June 3.--The labor congress which meets at Amsterdam on June 12 will be followed by a five days' session of the International Federation of Textile Workers' Associations. The English representatives will submit a motion in favor of an eight-hour day in all textile mills in all countries. The payment of higher dues will be urged and England will probably be selected at the meeting place for the next Congress.

ONE-CENT POSTAGE

Washington, June 3.--Arguments have been made to President Taft by business men from various parts of the country urging the recommendation to Congress of one-cent letter postage. There seems to be a growing sentiment in favor of penny postage, and no doubt the day is not far distant when the rates will be cut in two for first-class mail.

Fort Myers (Fla.) unions have secured an increase for all organizations in the town of 25 cents per day without friction.

Waycross (Ga.) painters have secured eight-hour day, reducing the hours from nine without decrease in pay.